The COMMONWEAL

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Blocs and Patriotism

IT IS perhaps too much to expect that because a brutal war is being fought, with fellow-Americans in the front lines thousands of miles from our shores, private interests and special groups should abandon all special claims. But even making every allowance, there are limits. The action of the National Grange, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and the National Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation in making a joint demand for raising farm prices at the very time there is such danger of inflation is a new low in political lobbying. What makes this demand particularly ugly is the fact that these "farm organizations" insist at the same time that city workers in industrial plants be compelled to work "at least fifty-four hours," with all overtime wage rates eliminated. We are confident that the great bulk of real American farmers cannot support demands so patently unpatriotic.

The anthracite coal strike — against John L. Lewis's raising union dues and in order to secure wage increases—is hardly as bare-faced or reprehensible. But it is in a similar category, for the miners have taken advantage of the winter, the transportation difficulties, fuel shortages and extraordinary war production demands to press for increases regardless of the consequences to the rest of the nation. And right in the midst of a desperate struggle where time is of the essence. The record of American labor in this war is not as bad as painted. The time lost through strikes has been exaggerated by many newspapers far beyond its true proportions. And one of the hopeful signs is the interest which labor leaders are taking in stimulating and maintaining war production. The legislative programs both the AFL and CIO recommended to the Seventy-eighth Congress, while hardly devoid of special pleading, manifest a growing appreciation of the national situation. Commercial agricultural interests take note.

Two Economic Ventures

OUT of all the talk stimulated by the economic problems involved in total war, two suggestions seem to merit the most careful investigation possible. In general, and if put into practice with judicious common sense, they seem to merit unqualified approval. The first is the idea of paying income taxes "as you go." This March 15, two score million people who have never before paid an income tax will have to do so. The mere apparatus necessary to collect from so vast a multitude is staggering. Doubtless hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—who have not been adequately provident will find themselves seriously embarrassed, even to pay their first quarterly installment. The loan sharks will do a land office business—or else the enforcement agencies of the Treasury will have to waste precious manpower "putting on the screws." Much of this could be avoided by deductions from salaries and wages rather than reliance on the old method. The other plan which on the face of it looks promising provides that persons who know they are going to want a new car or refrigerator or what-have-you after the war can start to pay for such purchases now, and by doing so will secure "priority" when the manufacturers are able once again to supply civilian demands. This is putting a premium on thrift, helping to lick inflation, and providing backlogs for industrial activity once our factories can turn back to producing for peace rather than destruction.

Conchy News

THE NUMBER of American conscientious objectors so far recorded in this war is not very large. Perhaps for this reason, and certainly because in the vortex of military and political events the newspapers naturally have no space for the doings of this small minority, most citizens have little notion of what has happened to those men whose principles have prevented them from entering the armed services. Yet since by definition they are men of principle, and the number of such at any given time is never too large, it seems worthwhile to give a brief report of what has happened to them in the last year. The Selective

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Service Act provides that everyone within certain designated age groups must register. Extreme CO's find it against conscience even to register, and for this the penalty is a prison sentence. Once a man has registered, he can lay claim to religious scruples against participation in war, and will be classified accordingly. From this group are drawn the large number at present serving in "Civilian Public Service" camps. In some cases the principles on which objectors base their stand are either not specifically religious, or else do not satisfy the Selective Service machinery. A number of men whose requests to be given CO status have been rejected have therefore refused to appear for physical examinations, or else for induction. Here again, a prison sentence is almost always the result. Finally a certain number of those in Civilian Public Service camps have reached the conclusion that they could not conscientiously acquiesce in conscription and war even to the extent of remaining in these camps, and a good many of these also have been sent to prison. Thus the actual situation at a given moment is constantly shifting. And since the government has been rather chary about making statistics public, it is not possible to be completely accurate in statements made about the number of persons actually in jail for their conscience's sake. We can report that the number in camps as of January 7 was 5,404. In mid-December, the National Service Board for Religious Objectors reported approximately 1,400 in jail. About one-half of these were Jehovah's Witnesses and another hundred were listed as Moslems. Thus approximately 600 persons were at that date serving sentences either because they had refused to register or because they had refused to take physical examinations or be inducted. Of course these figures attempt to eliminate cases of real "slackers" or "draft-dodgers." The *Conscientious Objector,* a monthly newspaper devoted to keeping "pacifists up to date on all important happenings of interest to them," says editorially in its January number: "So far in this war, nearly three times as many American conscientious objectors have gone to prison as went there during the entire period of the first World War."

So much, then, for the present situation of the approximately 7,000 conscientious objectors whose cases have been acted on by the public authorities. It is likewise interesting to note what the denizens of the Civilian Public Service camps are up to. Some are performing fairly obvious, routine work, of approximately the same nature as the CCC did during the depression — principally forestry. More interesting projects, and certainly projects of the highest social usefulness, are those whereby CO's are assigned to hospitals as orderlies, replacing men who have entered the armed services. Some 300 are at present serving in mental hospitals and more than 60 in general hospitals. We find a welcome endorsement of some of these young men by Dr. M. A. Tarumianz of the Delaware State Hospital, who described them as "very clean, hard-working . . . eager to do something worthwhile for their country." Certainly serving as an orderly in an institution for the insane should be a test of anyone's principles, and presumably people who volunteer for such work might be expected to be even more valuable than men who have made their livings at it. But perhaps the most dramatic of the projects carried out by CO's—and the most useful to humanity—have been those in which they have volunteered to serve as human guinea pigs for medical experimentation. There has been an understandable tendency on the part of those concerned with the management of such experiments not to call for volunteers for tests which might seriously threaten their lives or future health. Thus typical projects have involved testing the effectiveness of delousing methods. This is, of course, useful to the armed services, but it is even more useful in devising ways of preventing the spread of typhus. The technique used has been to plant approximately 200 "disinfected" lice on each volunteer and have him spend three weeks night and day in the same clothes and with the same bedding, thereby approximately reproducing conditions in war-stricken areas. Insecticide powders are then applied, and if successful, they are subjected to further tests under conditions which are more rigorous because less subject to scientific control. Another scientific experiment has involved determining the toxicity of sea water—whereby it might be possible to find out how much water you could swallow without jeopardizing your life if you found yourself floating on a raft in the ocean. Of course all of this work is volunteer, and campers are very scrupulous about what they will do and what they won't. An Indiana group recently voted not to participate in a high altitude experiment of a leading Chicago medical clinic, "having discovered that the Army is financing it and that the data to be gained therefrom is of military value only . . ."

One field of endeavor for CO's in the last war was farm work. It has likewise been used since Pearl Harbor. But because of a ruling by the Comptroller General of the United States that all wages paid for CO farm labor must be turned over to the Treasury, it seems likely that this will not continue to be the case. In the last war each worker was allowed to retain Army base pay and to give the balance to the Red Cross.

Such, then, is the general situation with regard to America's CO's. One must lament the number of them in jail; one may rejoice to see that principles have been vindicated in the sort of tasks which these men have elected to perform in place of military service.

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Word On China

THERE is a front in our titanic struggle which seldom makes the headlines. It is important, but it is remote. The battle there is not one of bombs and tanks and guns, except on the nearer fringes where resistance to modern armaments can only be passive. Yet despite its isolation and the fact that the defenders are not directly killing off Japanese, the success of the resistance, health measures, organization of relief and small-scale manufacture, education and rehabilitation will have a tremendous influence on the more immediate course of the Far East—except in the event of a crushing Japanese military victory.

The fact that 50,000,000 Chinese people, a large part of them unlettered and poverty-ridden, have escaped from slavery, taken refuge and started life anew in China's rugged West beyond the range of the Japanese bomber is one of the greatest mass achievements in all human history. It meant abandoning whatever industries and production facilities had been developed along the populous Chinese Coast, leaving behind the fertile valleys of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers. It meant abandoning these sources of their meager sustenance and setting forth on an arduous journey of a thousand miles into wild and forbidding and unknown lands. And this heroic exodus was not unopposed by Japanese airmen and soldiery. Some were able to proceed on railway boxcars or river vessels; but even those who had not started out on foot eventually had to take to unbeaten paths. They could not reach the Chinese West with empty hands, and so even precious factory machinery was transported on bamboo poles carried by factory workers. Farmers brought their seed and implements and animals. Even schools and colleges packed up their libraries and scientific apparatus to be set down beyond the protecting stonewall of the Szechwan Mountains. And here in these remote areas, as well as in South China not far from the Japanese, the New China is coming into being.

The struggle there is against many obstacles. There are the problems of wresting food from such soil, the battle against disease, famine, lack of tools and materials, the need of shelter and clothing. But the struggle continues on the part of government and people. Also in the forefront are the missionaries and such native leaders as Bishop Paul Yu-Pin, who supervise both immediate material aid and the measures toward becoming self-sustaining, and by their presence and their sharing of the common sufferings and aspirations build morale to an heroic pitch. Their influence can be counted on to moderate the imminent danger that patriotic fervor will degenerate into short-sighted chauvinism.

For the long pull, education is one of the most important sectors of the many-sided struggle. And in recent years—even before the war—school has been a much more serious business for the Chinese youngster than for his American counterpart. As Bishop Francis X. Ford, M.M., describes things in the current *Field Afar*, "Boarding schools are poles apart in China and in Western lands; there are no softening influences of any kind to coddle the Chinese boy. He brings his own blanket, wash basin, tiny oil lamp, mosquito netting, and a small suitcase with one change of clothes. These and his textbooks sum up his luxuries for his six years of high school. . . . The system appears to develop a sturdiness that may better fit the coming generation for a transformed world. . . . The complete break with the past and its traditional respect for parents and farm life, its aged culture of the arts and architecture and philosophy, may for the moment seem disastrous."

Bishop Ford's picture from South China fits in well with a recent release dealing with West China and the success of the Bailie Training Schools for Chinese boys of a similar age (between 12 and 18). Here they are learning to become mechanics, junior machinists, chemists, textile experts and accountants. One of the classes learns to take apart a Ford V-8 engine and put it together again. The weaving of school uniforms, manufacture of simple medicines, arithmetic and the digging of wells are part of the curriculum.

The day at these American-supported Bailie Training Schools begins at 4:30 in the morning and lasts till 8 at night. Courses are almost equally divided between study of theory and practical work. Mines and workshops run by the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives serve as laboratories for the students. Many friends of China have hoped that when the war is over the sweatshop systems of such cities as Shanghai will not be wedded to modern mass productionism, for the knowledge and experience so painfully achieved in the mountains of West China give promise of the development of better methods of raising the standard of living. A generation of young men and young women conscious of their ability to handle tools and knowing what decentralized workshops accomplished against the greatest odds, will be too ambitious to serve as industrial cogs.

Thus the absence of great Chinese military victories in current headlines should not blind us to the fact that far in the interior there lives and glows a force against totalitarianism that must be reckoned with. Because of that strength and determination on the part of a valiant people, Japan cannot win out in the Pacific. Because of the quiet resolution of 50,000,000 Chinese in preference to slavery to eke out a precarious life of their own in distant Szechwan and Yunnan, Hitler's days are numbered.

EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

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Totalitarian Liberals

An analysis of a new phenomenon.

By Norman Thomas

FOR my title I am, or thought I was, indebted to Peter Drucker who uses the term "totalitarian liberal" in his provocative new book, "The Future of Industrial Man." I have since been reminded that the phrase has been used by others, notably by former President Herbert Hoover in some of his speeches. The term differs somewhat in meaning according to its user. It suggests its own definition, but it is the purpose of this article to give my description of the human specimen in question and to tell why I think he is so definitely a force contributing to the coming of an American fascism against which he proclaims to high Heaven that he is the only genuine crusader.

The totalitarian liberal is a liberal at all not by any philosophical definition of the term "liberal," but only by courtesy and by custom. He is a liberal because he hates Hitler and thinks he hates Hitlerism. He is a liberal because he calls himself by that name and because regularly, or occasionally, he reads and applauds the *Nation,* the *New Republic, PM* or the New York *Post.* He is in line with a genuine liberal tradition in supporting fair play and no discrimination in the treatment of Negroes. He is a liberal, in a sense of the word common in America in the last generation, because he is sceptical or vigorously critical of big business, Wall Street, or monopoly capitalism—call it what you will—and concerned for the rights of the workers. He is a totalitarian because he has somehow persuaded himself that methods of propaganda and social controls, basically fascist in character, can be used for a good cause; that democracy can still be democracy and yet be led by a just and humane fuehrer who will use many of Hitler's methods, but without his cruelty and always for righteous ends; that is, ends which can be rationalized in the English but not the German language. In this respect E. H. Carr's book, "The Conditions of Peace," in its constructive program is the perfect expression of totalitarian liberalism and as such has received extravagant praise from American reviewers who did not themselves recognize, or, at any rate, would not admit, what they were praising.

Your totalitarian liberal is eloquent in denouncing the ugly means Hitler uses to achieve his ends but then he also denounces Hitler's ends. Similar means employed in Russia are another matter. The bravery and efficiency of the Russians in defending their homeland have almost persuaded him that Stalin is essentially a kindly character, a Russian Washington or Lincoln, perhaps, who on one occasion said, "God bless Roosevelt," thereby proving that he may rejoin the Church by the Russian Easter, especially if we can send him enough tanks in the interval. These liberals are much annoyed if you mildly suggest that Stalin was a pioneer, ahead of Hitler, in purges, concentration camps and all the techniques of modern regimentation. Even so good a man as Vice-President Wallace has discovered that a nation may be completely deprived of democracy as we know it and yet possess, by way of compensation, something called economic or cultural democracy—an illogical opinion upon which THE COMMONWEAL has already commented.

The basic conviction of the totalitarian liberal today is that the war must be won under Roosevelt and that if it is thus won, all other things will be added unto us. Lately he has been a little surprised and grieved to discover that winning the war seems to mean doing business with Darlan and preserving the imperial system in Asia and Africa. That the method of modern war does not easily lend itself to his sort of crusade he will not admit. Neither will he understand that the process by which the American people were put into a war which both Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Willkie assured them that their leadership would avoid makes it extraordinarily difficult to convince the people that they are fighting to impose the Four Freedoms which they themselves imperfectly possess upon all the rest of the world.

In consequence your totalitarian liberal is almost hysterical about enforcing unity upon the American people. Any criticism, except perhaps his own, is born of the Devil; that is, Hitler, and should be suppressed. Thus it has come to pass that a shrewd and comparatively tolerant Department of Justice has been forced into various prosecutions largely by "liberal" pressure. Your totalitarian liberal does not criticize the Government for a use of conspiracy indictments almost without precedent in American law and concerning which the Department itself is half apologetic. Instead, he deplores the fact that a larger num-

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ber of determined non-interventionists, before Pearl Harbor, was not included in the indictment, and he denounces every outspoken critic of these conspiracy indictments for fascist sympathies.

The Department of Justice itself has been clever enough to round up in its conspiracy indictments men and women, who for the most part have been guilty of such anti-Semitism or other intolerance of speech and action as to deserve the condemnation of thoughtful Americans. It has not indicted them, however, for such crimes, but only for seditious conspiracy of which the principal evidence seems to be the language in which they opposed our entering into war. In thus extending the interpretation of conspiracy the Government has been able, by indirection, to smear persons and organizations which it could not possibly indict with any hope of success. The fact that this use of conspiracy charges can be extended if it is successful to a general attack on sharp critics of the Government, does not bother your totalitarian liberal in the least. For the duration of the war he is sure that he, as all other righteous Americans, will be on the side of the angels. The others deserve their fate.

Suppression

One of the deepest regrets of your totalitarian liberal is the failure of the Government, which he had persuaded himself was his own, to suppress the New York *Daily News,* the Chicago *Tribune* and the Hearst papers, or to punish their proprietors. In favor of such suppression he uses the language and the type of argument that reactionaries have in other years used concerning the *Nation* and *New Republic.* Indeed, if in obscurity some prospective dictator now lays his plans for acquiring power, he will do well to keep a book of clippings from "liberal" sources to use later on in support of most of the tactics he will deem necessary. There are few things more certain than that the power of omnipotent government will never be used for the utopian ends liberals desire, by the means which they now support. They are strengthening the forces which ultimately will be used against them—unless they, too, should become completely corrupted by the means they now advocate. It is as naïve intellectually as it is wrong ethically to believe that the ends so far justify the means, that Roosevelt can use a denatured version of totalitarianism and win a victory for democracy.

In spite of the fact that most high officials in the Roosevelt Administration have had the shrewd common sense to avoid the epidemic of suppressions of newspapers and meetings and the arrest of individuals on flimsy evidence, which characterized the First World War, and would characterize the Second if the more extreme of our totalitarian liberal friends had their way, or if there were more widespread and organized dissatisfaction, civil liberties in America are in worse case than they were under Mr. Wilson. One reason for making so serious a charge is the fact that in this war self-professed liberalism has been so largely identified with totalitarian practices.

Totalitarian concept in America

The worst case in point is the Presidential order of February 19, 1942, turning over to the army an almost unlimited power over civilians. The historian of the future, if he should be of the sort who loves significant dates, may well take that date for the beginning of the totalitarian concept and practice of justice in America. False stories of extensive sabotage by Japanese-Americans in Hawaii stirred up the latent racial prejudice which is so strong on the west coast. To this prejudice was added a naked greed for lands made prosperous by Japanese labor. Mr. Roosevelt's order of February 19 was a surrender to an unhealthy public opinion and to the army's appetite for power. As a result 112,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans—72,000 of the latter against whom no crime was charged and whom the F.B.I. had not thought it necessary to hold on suspicion—were dragged from their homes and businesses and put in concentration camps, first at so-called assembly centers, and now in some ten barrack cities in lonely places. The army tried to do the job humanely; the Civilian Relocation Authority, now in control, has a real interest in its wards and is trying to relocate them by families or small groups in the interior of the country. Nevertheless, in this process the evacuees lost about 60 percent of their property. Men in camps must work for wages never higher than nineteen dollars a month. Family life has been disrupted; children who had the lowest rate of juvenile delinquency in California tend to run wild so that the Government has to put in social workers to cure that which it has created. News of all this has been propagandized to our hurt through Asia. Following the evacuation of the Japanese-Americans, the army has proceeded, secretly, to evacuate some 70 or 80 white Americans against whom no crime was charged. All these cases were on the west coast, but Lieutenant General Hugh Drum, in command of the vast and populous eastern area, has asserted like power by proclamation. The philosophic basis for this is precisely the philosophic basis for far crueller treatment of Jews and other victims in German concentration camps. The well-being of the state as interpreted by its ruler is the supreme law. Justice to the individual as in our democracy we had come to understand it, after long centuries of struggle under the influence of Christian concepts, doesn't matter.

This totalitarian process is excused or even praised by our totalitarian liberals who, against

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the weight of evidence, regarded it as a valuable contribution to winning a war which must be won, no matter how like our enemies we become in the process. Even the majority of the members of the governing committees of the American Civil Liberties Union, who do not quite deserve the name of totalitarian liberals, approved the Presidential order. Fortunately—but wholly illogically—this same majority then turned around and found fault with practically all the particular acts committed by the army on the basis of the President's order with his entire approval!

The majority of the same American Civil Liberties Union has also endorsed in principle "total conscription" of labor—an idea dear to the hearts of totalitarian liberals. Nothing is more truly the foe of freedom than the right of the state to command men and women to invest their whole lives at its behest, often at tasks condemned by the conscience of the individual. The world has accepted military conscription as the price of war which is in itself a reason for getting rid of the war system, but to extend this type of conscription over all labor is to surrender a great bulwark of defense against the totalitarian state. In America conscription of labor cannot even be given such safeguards for individual rights as the English geographical and political situation permits. Added to the freezing of wages in our sprawling country with its uneven standards, the conscription of labor will lower morale and lack even the excuse of efficiency. The demand for it springs in large part from the failure of the Government efficiently to use the powers it already has. But these considerations mean nothing to the totalitarian liberal to whom the supreme commandment is to grant to the government anything which the government says will help it win the war.

The rôle of criticism

This picture I have drawn of totalitarian liberals is a composite. It is not an exact portrait of any one of them. Among them the disease of totalitarianism rages with varying intensity and the prospects for the cure of some of them are fairly bright. A few of them, for instance, realize what a serious tactical mistake they made in the Congressional campaign of 1942 when the *New Republic* and the Union for Democratic Action with notable unsuccess made the vital, indeed almost the only, test of a candidate's fitness his uncritical support of Mr. Roosevelt's program, or lack of program before Pearl Harbor, especially in the field of foreign relations. Nowadays Pearl Buck and Wendell Willkie are persuading some of them that criticism may be both patriotic and useful.

I have already acknowledged that our totalitarian liberals are usually sound in opposing race discrimination—except where Japanese and perhaps Germans are involved. Their totalitarianism does not, as some of their critics imply, spring of necessity from their acceptance of social planning and a high degree of economic collectivism in the modern world. Properly managed, that can be made a condition of truer freedom for the individual.

One might wish that certain of our totalitarian liberals for labor's own sake would demand higher standards of democracy and fair play within a great many unions, but they are right in their general attitude of sympathy with the workers. What they fail to understand is that by their own surrender of the principles of civil liberty they are stripping the workers and the plain people everywhere of their defenses against the coming of an American dictatorship.

Yes, and by their opposition or indifference to any well planned effort to feed the children of Hitler's victims, they are largely responsible for leaving Europe in the darkness of hunger and hate, unrelieved by even little candles of mercy and humanity. Thus they make more difficult the establishment of a just and lasting peace. And so by their whole conduct do our totalitarian liberals unwittingly contribute to the triumph of that enormous evil against which, under its nazi name, they deafen us with their exhortations to fight.

Lo: The Vine

—And so, the garnering of sheaves.
Lo: along the walls,
the vine has lost its leaves; even the locust
stands unleafed; like clenched mortal hands in mortal wind,
the leaves of maple move to the wind's stirring,
move and sigh. Even the oak
has spoken the withering of all the world
and all its grief, leaf-fall and fallen leaf.
Ah—even its stoutest leaves now,
now know the wind is stronger.
Lo: now like the world down from glories
fallen, the last leaf.

(Now from our laggard steps and sighs
let us turn and, praising, stifle all our cries,
saying now no more, "Last leaf, last leaf:
the world has fallen so to grief."

Now let us lift the latch and enter,
make fast the catch.

Lest with the world we grieve apart,
now let us mind the hearth and tend the heart.

Now close the doors and seal the lips to sighs:

now from her humbling stool, let the Bride splendidly arise!)

RAYMOND E. F. LARSSON.

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Conductors

Their grandeurs and foibles, past and present.

By **Max Graf**

"I DO NOT wish to be an emperor or a king, but stand like him and conduct!" shouted young Richard Wagner when he first came to the Opera House in Dresden and saw Karl Maria von Weber, the composer of the opera Freischuetz, conduct a performance. The enthusiastic young artist was fascinated by seeing the great musician at the desk, spreading his arms and conjuring the players in the orchestra and the singers on the stage, ordering and making signs, commanding them and driving them on. Karl Maria von Weber was the first great dramatic conductor. Not only did he make sounds and harmonies rise out of the magic kettle of the orchestra. Music had a dramatic soul, and expressed the passions and the movements of the stage. Richard Wagner's impulsive and ecstatic conducting, which influenced a whole generation, from Hans Richter to Toscanini, derived from Karl Maria von Weber, the great romantic.

The sight of a great conductor fascinated Richard Wagner and is exciting to the general public too. He can arouse the enthusiasm of people as much as a piano or violin virtuoso, or a tenor. Great conductors are idolized like primadonnas. The small pale hand of Artur Nikisch, rising out of big, effective cuffs, the elegant left hand of Felix Weingartner, adorned with a flashing diamond, have been objects of fanatical adoration in all the great cities of Europe and in this country, too. A nice story has been told in Berlin, where Artur Nikisch conducted the philharmonic orchestra of that city. It was very fashionable to go to Nikisch's concerts, and the elegant and rich of Berlin thronged the boxes. If you were a member of that society, you had to go to Nice and Monte Carlo in December, to Switzerland in July, to the Lido in August and to the Nikisch concerts in December. An old lady, who was accustomed to live in accordance with this time table, was sitting with her daughter at a Nikisch performance. When that emotion streamed through the concert hall which is supposed to announce the appearance of the hero of the podium, the old lady said to her daughter: "Please don't forget to push me when he starts to fascinate." To fascinate is the highly paid business of the modern conductor.

The modern conductor, who travels from one town to another and packs interesting tonal shades, sound mixtures and changes of tempi in his trunk, beside the elegant full dress and baton, can boast of a long story. The conductors of old times, of course, did not look like the modern. They had not yet become sorcerers in tails, Svengalis of the concert stage. They did not yet study their appearance and movements in front of a mirror, as Furtwaengler used to. They had not yet their current value on the international stock-exchange of musical life. They were not dressed in elegantly built clothes, and their hands were not carefully manicured. The Nikisch lock, falling romantically over the forehead, the Furtwaengler contortions, and all other means of the modern conductor's business did not yet exist. Conductors in olden times were not demoniacs, sorcerers and every variety of actor. The first conductors were clergymen, dressed solemnly and ornately, and were members of the religious framework of the middle ages.

In medieval churches and cloisters, Gregorian chants were heard at masses and the Divine Office, sung by choirboys and clergymen; here the first conductor appeared: the leader of the choir. In the old churches in Rome this leader was the prior. In Monte Cassino he was the schoolmaster. As his mark of office, he held the crozier in his left hand and conducted the songs with picturesque movements of his right hand, which indicated the rising and falling of the melodies. All singers have to watch his hands [so writes a Benedictine of the eleventh century] as they demonstrate the song by means of measured movement and make all singers sing unanimously, with a single mouth.

This ecclesiastical conductor was conductor and precentor at the same time. He was in his own day compared with "a farmer's man who pushes oxen with a goad." One was not very polite in those days.

A new task was given to the conductor of church music when in the tenth and eleventh centuries the venerable melodies began to be vested in the new clothes of many-voiced music. A fine-wrought web of voices surrounded the old unison song. The Gregorian was put in a solemn shrine of sound. The conductor had to guide the singers, to keep together the choristers and monks, whose

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voices soared to the vault and fused with the clouds of incense floating slowly through the aisle. The leader of the choruses, often a great composer of masses, conducted with hands or with the foot or fingers, as Ramis de Pareya said in the fifteenth century. The use of a baton was known at this time too. A stick made of gold or silver was the distinguishing mark of clerical leaders of choirs.

It is strange that in the moment when the first batons appeared, the bad manners of conductors appeared too. A Spanish author, Bermudo (1549), writes that clerical conductors of choirs often forgot they were in church. They beat so vehemently on the songbooks that you could hear the noise "in the whole church"; and another author, Philomates, describes in Latin hexameters how some precentors led the choir with "spreading hands, as when at a fight between two men, the one is not able to pluck the hair of his opponent with his nails, and the dangerous struggle ends with his defenselessly spreading both hands. Others I saw beating the measure with their feet and stamping like satisfied horses that, playing on a green meadow, frolicsomely rejoice. There are others who behave like swans and make movements like such. Just as a swan sings with neck bent backwards, so they conduct." There must have been conductors in the middle ages, dressed in cowls or surplices, who were the Furtwaenglers and Mitropoulos of their day.

The Renaissance

A new type appeared with the Renaissance. This great period, in addition to many new modern forms of music, created the modern conductor. The musicians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries strove after expressive music. They wanted moods and passions expressed in music. They were looking for exciting crescendos and changing tempi. In the place of the solemnity of the music of the middle ages, we find a new, free expression of human temperament and feeling. The art of orchestral music developed. Opera was created. In the orchestra of the opera houses of Florence, Venice, Rome and Naples, they sat at the harpsichord, holding together singers and players with energetic beats. Performances of choral music and the choruses in church kept on being led in the customary way, by beats of the baton. Some conductors struck the measure with their hands, some with rolls. Kaspar Prinz (1696) even remarks having seen in Syracuse a conductor beating the measure with a handkerchief tied to a stock as though it were a flag.

Conductors of those times have even been known [a contemporary description assures us] to "beat with the baton so vehemently that fragments flew off. They believed it was the right manner of conducting if they could beat down forcefully, as though threshing oats." Johann Baehr (1719) amusingly described the various types of conductors of his day. Those who stamp the ground with their feet, others who beat the measure with their heads, others who take a roll in hand and look like generals, who command their squadrons with the help of their staffs. And finally those who beat the measure with both hands, or with a long stick two fathoms long.

As in the seventeenth century, the two kinds of conducting (with the baton and at the piano) continued side by side throughout the eighteenth century. The Italian operas were conducted with the harpsichord. In the French opera the beating the measure with the baton was more usual. The famous writer Grimm called the conductors of French opera houses "wood cutters." There were arguments and fights whether the Italian or the French method was the better. Finally the French became victorious all over Europe, in the middle of the eighteenth century. Time was needed, however, before the French method asserted itself universally. When Karl Maria von Weber gave his first concert in London, he still beat the measure with a roll.

The first conductor who no longer led the orchestra sitting at the piano but standing at a desk was Johann Friedrich Reichhardt, of the Prussian court, later on, when the French revolution started, one of the most ardent enthusiasts of modern ideas. His conducting with the baton appeared, of course, a revolutionary thing. The theorist Kirnberger wrote indignantly that Reichhardt, Marpurg and all the rest of the modern crowd "want to push conducting away from the piano and to introduce the stylish taste." The "stylish taste" asserted itself victoriously, thanks to the efforts of Spohr, Spontini and Mendelssohn. The subjective power of the modern orchestra demanded an artist as conductor who could command the armies of the romantic orchestra like some Napoleon. The conductor began to feel the centre of the orchestral performance; Beethoven freed all the forces of his orchestra, making it sound like a speech of the orators of the French revolution, arousing masses. Beethoven himself was an ecstatic conductor, who seemed to disappear behind the desk, bending down to earth, when he wanted a *piano* and jumped aloft when he tried to indicate a *forte*. The frenzy of Beethoven inspired the frenzy of Wagner, and Wagner's excited and exciting leadership created a whole generation of great conductors: Hans von Buelow, Felix von Weingartner, Hans Richter, Artur Nikisch, Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss. The modern conductor is essentially a Beethoven-conductor whose art descended from the great Thunderer himself, who like Prometheus filled clods of loam with souls, life and human passion.

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The most recent type of conductor is the traveling conductor, the virtuoso of the concert hall, the magnetizer, the demon, the actor, who exhibits his ability to hypnotize an orchestra before audiences in all great cities of the world. Those tamers of wild beasts are a product of the industrialization of modern musical life. The great modern conductor is a kind of magician who travels from town to town like an ancient rope-dancer or fire-eater. He sells his emotions and contortions to the highest bidder. He is possessed with demoniacal power which has its fixed course. This traveling business produces the dramatic exhibitions at the desk which are so terribly overvalued by the public, the hunting after surprising nuances, tempi which make no sense but are theater effects, and variations of sound which are unnatural: artificial *piani* and puffed up *fortes*. The conductor of modern times has become a vain virtuoso, who spreads his peacock tails every evening in another concert hall. He is often fascinating, and has most of the faults of virtuosos: the exaggerated vanity, the childish egotism, the hunger after applause, the business mentality. Only the greatest, like Toscanini, feel painfully the contradiction between the artistic work of the conductor and the theater in the concert hall which has become the conductor's nemesis. He used to say how happy he would be if the conductor could be hidden behind a screen. But that mentality is an exception. The famous conductors need almost all the rope-dancer's apparatus and the instruments of a snake-charmer. They are the happy brothers of tenors with a high C, of artificially peeping coloratura singers and Wagnerians with staying power, indestructable Siegfrieds and weather-proof Isoldes. Seldom is the conductor of today what he should be, the leader of musical taste, who modestly disappears behind the great work, the humble interpreter of great music, who honestly and faithfully has no other ambition than to reproduce the greatest artistic creations of humanity without admixture and alteration, as the representative of a musical community and its greatest musician. "We have to be helmsmen, not oarsmen," Franz Liszt used to say.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

AFTER I had read Dorothy Thompson's "Listen, Hans" (Houghton, $2.50), parts of it more than once, and before I had begun my appointed task of writing about it in this place, it befell that I heard Miss Thompson's speech in honor of M. Jacques Maritain, at the celebration of the philosopher's sixtieth birthday (which will next week appear in these columns), and it was then

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borne in upon me, very forcibly, what dimly I had surmised before, namely, that in Miss Thompson's work as a writer and as a speaker modern American journalism and oratory have united to produce a beneficial force of the highest practical value. For in her work, probably also in her personality, because the one depends integrally on the other, she seems to have most successfully fertilized and given desirable directions to public opinion, by her own eager and enthusiastic response to spiritual and intellectual forces combating the forces of distintegration and corruption, and by her almost unique gift to convey her insights and interpretations to great numbers of our people, popularizing them in the best sense of the word, and not diluting them with vulgarizing concessions to the baser desires of democracy, or to the sentimental vagueness of liberal "perfectionism" and "utopianism." In these respects, Dorothy Thompson may rank, in the history of that happier age when mankind will look back critically upon the figures and works of our time of acute crisis, as the greatest because the most morally and ethically sound and because of her superior power to communicate her spirit with exceptional clarity and power, of all the journalists and publicists of today.

However that may be, as to the immediate value and importance of her latest book, a collection of radio talks to all who might be able to hear them in Germany, prefaced by something more valuable than the broadcasts, a long essay on the German mind, there can be, I think, no justifiable dispute. Even as no problem among the many most perplexing ones faced by this nation and all the allied nations now fighting for life, liberty and the right at least to follow after happiness is more serious than the problem of how to defeat our chief enemy, nazi Germany, so it is equally true that no problem of the future attempts at achieving permanent, or at least long-enduring, peace, is more difficult than the question of how to deal with the German people.

Now on this central theme of our times, Dorothy Thompson's right to speak, and the influence of what she has to say, are both unquestionable, and, it seems to me, equally beneficial, if not in all details, if not in particular suggestions, yet certainly in the broad, strong, healthful stream of her fundamental thesis, and of her dominant spirit. This is not a book for specialists and experts, although they might gain much good from its close study, and so might Miss Thompson, in preparing future editions. It is a book preeminently for the general public of American men and women of good will and of common intelligence, who in heart and mind and soul are genuine humanists because first of all, though not always explicitly, they base their belief in and their love for human beings on faith in God, their common Father. How that belief guides and gives dynamic force to all the lines of thought and records of actual experience set forth in this volume, let the book itself instruct you. In pointing to what seems to me its fundamental premise, I shudder to think that I may give the impression that I am calling attention to a sermon; that is, a conventional sermon. On the contrary, this is a book of transfiguration, not of homiletics. It should be circulated by the hundreds of thousands, and be eagerly discussed, strongly dealt with by those who dissent from its thesis, or from many of its minor points or suggestions. For it is a communication of spirit—the spirit of love de-sentimentalized, love clasping the strong hand of justice even as it turns to mercy for final aid; it is a book also of hard, clear reason.

Communications

THE SPIRIT OF THE ROMAN LITURGY

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: That was a magnificent article by Father Reinhold in your issue of January 1, and it will be interesting to watch your letter column for various reactions. So boldly partial to his own opinions yet objective toward matters about which most people are sensitive or "personal," Father Reinhold is bound to arouse some opposition, particularly when he draws a distinction between a "manly and adult" approach to God (the Roman liturgy) and a "feminine, immature and talkative" approach (Saint Bernard and his host of modern imitators). One wonders where Saint Francis would be placed by this classification, or Saint Ignatius with his "Anima Christi," and others too numerous to mention.

There are evocations and overtones in this article which might open up a long pathway of reflections: what does the perfect love of God consist in, for example; the difference between love and affection; sentiment and emotion; sacred and profane love; on and on until those old headaches Eros and Agape are reached.

But the magnificence of these pages lies in Father Reinhold's vivid feeling for the Roman liturgy as an expression of the worship of God as well as a way of life for mankind and his power of communicating this to the reader. One sees what he here presents as a great light set upon a hill—a great light burning steadily but a bit cold and inaccessible, requiring, for an approach to it, a special (shall we say hieratic?) mood and manner. I am sure Father Reinhold doesn't wish to create this impression, but here and there—more between the lines, perhaps, than in so many words—God the comforter of the afflicted and the intimate companion of humble souls is somewhat obscured by God the majestic king.

So there are points which call for further clarification and possibly Father Reinhold will do this for us in a longer article or a book. "The Spirit of the Roman Liturgy" was written at fever heat, one feels. So intense it is, so utterly sincere that it makes most other current writings in this field, however scholarly and charged with reverence, sound labored and uninspired. With one stroke Father Reinhold has broken up old and accepted patterns of pious thought; also pious phraseology. It needed to be done.

LANDON M. ROBINSON.

POLAND

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editors: Your desk is most probably overcrowded with new books and pamphlets, but do not miss one of them, "What Poland Wants" by Ignacy Matuszewski, a pamphlet published recently by the Na-

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tional Committee of the Americans of Polish Descent. In bringing it to your attention, I do not indulge my own personal feelings toward Poland. I am doing it because I believe this pamphlet to be of great importance, since it voices the faith of thirty-five million people whose unflinching struggle has been documented in the recently published "Black Book of Poland"; it voices the aims of a nation whose army ranks the fifth among armies of the United Nations, whose air force has written glorious pages in the epic of the Battle of Britain.

The peoples of the United Nations must know and realize clearly what their staunchest ally wants; they must test their opinions and find out whether the views they profess are not merely the echoes of the slanders that had been poured out against Poland by either German or Russian propaganda, begun by Catherine and Frederick, continued by the Third Internationale and Fifth Column.

"What Poland Wants" is not "propaganda." Neither is it a program of a political party, nor a plea on behalf of Poland. It is a candid statement of the will of thirty-five million Poles.

Poland demands freedom and sovereignty for all her lands. She claims her future security through a revision of her frontier with Germany, mainly through the liquidation of the artificial abnormality of East Prussia. She insists that the fate of her neighbors should not be settled without consulting her, still less against her advice.

Such is the will of Poland. It is not much. It has never been concealed. Those who had concluded an alliance with Poland had recognized that will. Now, in the midst of the "month of gratitude" for the heroic Russians, among the posters with red stars and the resounding echoes of the unforgettable defense of Stalingrad, it is time to remind and to remember that "there is no Polish land for sale; there is none to give away—not an acre, not a yard, whether for the sake of converting our enemies, or for the love of our allies."

The America Press, likewise, published a short time ago a "documentary outline of papal pronouncements and relief efforts, in behalf of Poland, since March, 1939." The Holy Father, Himself, is the champion of the Polish cause. To the Catholics of the world, to the American Catholics, this cause is particularly appealing. Even in this quick-moving world there is not one Catholic that can forget "so beloved a land as Poland whose fidelity to the Church and services in the defense of Christian civilization, written in indelible characters on the pages of history, have a special claim to the brotherly sympathy of the whole world."

MARTA WANKOWICZ.

The Stage & Screen

The Russian People

I DON'T really know much about the condition of Russian letters. During the past twenty years, however, I have tried to read such modern Russian novels as have appeared in English. To be brief, they have amounted to nothing. "The Russian People" keeps at about the expected literary level, taking the novels I have seen as supplying a standard for expectations. It is very mediocre stuff written by a very young man of no special talent named Konstantin Simonov. Produced by the Theatre Guild and directed by Harold Clurman (Clifford Odets being responsible for the American adaptation), one is naturally led to suppose that this is *the* great play of World War II. On the playbill you can read that during its performance ". . . the hearts of the spectators beat faster and no one is ashamed of his tears. This is not a theatrical reaction, but a warm and comradely understanding . . . we are not only touched, but intent; we are not only shaken, but are filled with hatred for the enemy."

My heart did not beat faster. No tears started. I was untouched and unshaken. My feeling regarding the enemy was the same after as before viewing the play. The play is static. It depends in the most unbelievable way on that technique which shows such a fine feeling for originality: the endlessly long arm of coincidence. The stage is peopled by stereotypes and although briefly done, the point that Stalin is omniscient is emphatically made. According to this play, the Russians as fighters are individualistic guerrillas struggling with a faceless, mad enemy. And what are they fighting for? Why, for Russian memories of birch trees and the like. "The Russian people" is without any philosophic structure. It sells animal hatred and theatrical attitudinizing. The best measure for the Simonov type of mind is to compare his work with that of Malraux. Then bid Mr. Simonov to retire into the exterior darkness. His failure to grasp the implica-

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tions of character is abysmal. It is perfectly illustrated in his treatment of a callous scoundrel—Kozlovsky (Eduardo Franz)—who first is proved destitute of feeling, next capable of the most dangerous type of spying and then shown successively as a simpleton and coward. Go see Donald Duck instead. *(At the Guild Theater.)*

The Dough Girls

WASHINGTON is the place where you need to know three congressmen and a western senator to get a place in a long line waiting for lunch in a hotel. Getting a room is impossible. For this setting Joseph Fields has contrived a goatish comedy. He packs into one suite of hotel rooms Edna (Virginia Field) whose "husband" unhappily has another and earlier wife in Madison, Wisconsin, Vivian (Arleen Whelan) whose "husband" is what might be called a current arrangement, and Nan (Doris Nolan) whose delayed divorce has prevented her formal remarriage but not her acquisition of an equivalent status. While the girls try to regularize their precarious positions, they incidentally set up relations with official Washington through a general, an admiral, a Russian Czar, a local Mrs. Hobby and a Russian female sniper. This gives Mr. Fields opportunity for broad satire and quite harmless comedy. There are some extremely funny episodes created chiefly by the addle-pated behavior of Vivian. Of course, the characteristic behavior of all the characters is amoral. Altogether it is a light thing consisting of tired business man humor. George S. Kaufman staged it. *(At the Lyceum.)*

New Faces of 1943

LEONARD SILLMAN produced this fair but not quite good enough musical comedy. It has fast action, passable songs by Lee Wainer, pretty faces and a profusion of not quite good enough but nevertheless up to the minute sketches chiefly drawn from the theatrical world. In fact, as I think about it, the book is weak mainly because it depends for material on situations in the theater or on things formerly done by the theater. One notable exception is a clever skit reflecting the oft-bemoaned disappearance of a plentiful supply of domestic help. As the materials for the scenes come for the most part from theatrical surroundings familiar to the authors of the book, so too some of the humor consists of sly talk regarding unnatural actions, the character of which, a small minority in the theater will never understand, is revloting to people who are by no means queasy. By the way, a torch song, "Love, Are You Raising Your Head," made me suddenly realize that in 1943 torch singing is about as up-to-date as silent movies. John Lund, the principal author of the review, should end in the movies. He has all the necessary attributes for a star of the Alan Ladd class. *(At the Ritz.)*

JAMES N. VAUGHAN.

Stars Glitter in War Films

ONE WAR theme with which Hollywood has been so far unsuccessful is that of the French since the fall of Paris. Perhaps the subject is too serious for cinematic melodrama. Now to such minor efforts as "Paris Calling" and "Joan of Paris" must be added *"Reunion in France."* In spite of its good cast this film is merely an emotional love story with its locale in a conquered country that is overrun with brutish enemy, cooperative Quislings and pathetic but unvanquished victims. Joan Crawford plays the spoiled wealthy Parisian who returns to Paris after its fall to find her sweetheart (Philip Dorn) working with the Germans. Most of the Germans in this film are pretty Hunnish; at times they are even the drunken beasts left over from the films made during the last war. Our social butterfly leaves her Quisling sweetheart, works for a modiste, helps an RAF flier (John Wayne) escape so he can continue his fight against the nazis. The main trouble with "Reunion" is its too melodramatic, unhand-me-villain script and its rather trite story in which half the characters turn out to be someone that you had no reason to suspect they might be. Its main asset is its ringing speeches against tyranny, conquerors and traitors. Jules Dassin directed all this fancy business. Joseph L. Mankiewicz's production is good, although too slick. Miss Crawford looks wonderful in clothes that are the last word; but she fools no one in her regeneration from a spoiled playgirl to a serious patriot.

"China Girl" should really have been called "Naughty Boy," for it is more concerned with Johnny Williams (a roguish, self-centered American reporter played with devil-may-care, masculine charm by George Montgomery) than with Miss Young (a Vassar-graduated Chinese played by Gene Tierney without a smile). True enough, the setting is China in 1941 and Ben Hecht's script has some very serious things to say against the Japanese and some very heroic things in favor of the Chinese; but it also says a lot of silly things as its melodramatic plot traces the adventures of Johnny who is really a wolf in reporter's clothing. Johnny falls in with a couple of whites who are for some vague reason spying for the Japs. Victor McLaglen portrays one of these as a great big lug with plenty of brains and brawn but no motive. Lynn Bari plays the other spy rather attractively until she falls head-over-heels for Johnny's physique, which he displays all too obviously. In the meantime Johnny, who never misses an opportunity to cheat on friend or foe, gets his come-uppance from the beautiful Chinese girl who sets him straight about China's plight when she's not too busy saying "I love you" to the hardened reporter, who is pleased but somewhat surprised at such elemental behavior from a Vassar grad. Johnny, of course, turns noble before this pretentious boy-meets-girl-romance-among-fallen-China runs out. The Hays Office no doubt had something to do with the ending. Henry Hathaway directed some of the Chinese-vs-Japanese scenes with moving effect. Mr. Hecht, who also produced, thought a little too highly of his own script. A couple of the supporting actors deserve attention, particularly Sig Rumann and Myron McCormick. And a youngster, Bobby Blake, almost steals the show.

"Stand By For Action" couldn't decide whether it was supposed to be a serious melodrama about the Navy doing its stuff or a humorous takeoff about a group of sailors whose ship suddenly becomes a nursery full of babies.

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Producers Robert Z. Leonard and Orville O. Dull gave their film a good production and Mr. Leonard also handled the direction capably. But the scriptwriters went haywire and couldn't make up their minds. We see Charles Laughton as a puffy, pompous rear admiral who thinks it would be a good idea to put Brian Donlevy, a lieutenant commander who rose the hard way, in charge of a made-over World War I destroyer. Then Old Iron-pants Laughton gets the puckish idea to assign a snobbish lieutenant (Robert Taylor) on the same boat as executive officer. Of course Donley and Taylor cross swords. Before the film has run its corny course, hard, unsentimental Donlevy shows he has a heart beneath his sea-washed chest, and socialite, Harvard-trained Taylor proves that he's every inch a man and quite a hero to boot. Walter Brennan shows them both up as the salty tar who served on this same destroyer in the last war. He gets a couple of bumps on the head, but he, like the other two, is given a medal for bravery in the finale. But the film's entirely unprepared-for twist comes when the destroyer's captain, tough Donlevy, suddenly turns human, orders the rescue of two men in a lifeboat. And with the two men are 18 babies and two women who become mothers shortly after their rescue. Indignant are the sailors who have to act as nurses. But everyone seems to be having a swell time changing diapers, bathing babies, minding the nursery—everyone except Taylor who is put in charge of the kids by Donlevy-turned-pixy. Of course there's a battle. Of course the destroyer saves the day by sinking the attacking Jap battleship. It's unfortunate that the film's producers didn't see their way clear in this one to make an interesting and at least somewhat believable story about sailors who try to care for 20 babies. But Hollywood must have its fun. In this case, the melodrama and fun don't mix.

If you're a devotee of murder mysteries, you'll find that *"London Blackout Murder"* merits your attention. Curt Siodmak's original screenplay could have been improved by dropping a few false clues that he uses as distractions from the main issue and by clarifying a few more points in the finale. But Producer-Director George Sherman, in this hour-length film which is his first departure from Westerns, manages to build up an effective suspense and an an interesting modern DeQuincey kind of atmosphere with bombings and blackouts that make a good setting for this homicide and crime detection plot. The story concerns a former surgeon who now takes the law into his own hands by killing some members of the upper classes who are working against England's success in the war effort. Why he couldn't go right to Scotland Yard and let their men dispose of the saboteurs instead of making the detectives trail him down after the murders isn't quite clear. In any case the judge at the trial in the finale is somewhat apologetic about having to deal severely with such a patriot, but he does state that since it is the book of law we are fighting for, we must follow the law, and he will execute whatever verdict the jury returns. Mary McLeod plays the heroine of the piece in a rather colorless manner—except for frequent expressions of extreme fright. John Abbott gives an excellent portrayal as the misguided patriot who metes out justice to suit himself. And Lloyd Corrigan gives us a Scotland Yard man who has a little more cheer and vitality in his make-up than is usual in this type of blasé snooper. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

How Not to Help an Author

By THEODORE MAYNARD

EVERY YEAR I receive a number of letters that read something like this: "I am a senior at St. Millicent's High School, and in order to stimulate interest in Catholic literature, every member of our class has to write on a living Catholic author. I have to write on you, and as I really know nothing about you, please tell me all about yourself. Sincerely, Elizabeth Anne Murphy." Long years ago, when this sort of thing was new to me—and possibly I was more amiable of disposition than I am now—I would reply, referring the student to the *Who's Who,* or to some of my books and articles that might serve her purpose. But the thing became such a nuisance that when I published my autobiography, I had an idea that that great work—if it was good for nothing else—would at least supply what Miss Murphy and her tribe wanted, so that they would not need to bother me any more. Vain hope! Possibly some of them *have* come across that book and used it; but it is obvious from the letters I still receive that most of them have never heard of it. I am still asked to "tell all." It is also obvious that these lazy little rascals want me to write their essays for them, and sometimes they let it out that they have never read a word I have written and—if I know them—never intend to do so. Now that my patience has become exhausted I drop little Miss Murphy's letter into the waste-paper basket.

There are others I drop there, too. Sister Ellatruda will write to tell me, "I am so anxious to build up our school library. You will agree that this is a splendid way of stimulating interest in Catholic literature, and in your own books as well. Won't you send me . . ." No, dear Sister, I can't afford it. But when Sister Benerina explains her splendid project of gathering photographs and autographs from authors and putting them on exhibition—"and if yours are there, we hope it will be a means of getting those who see them to read what you have written"—though I wonder why on earth anybody should want to exhibit my photograph, which might even deter people from reading me—I usually send it. That during the course of the year the expense of dealing with these requests is not inconsiderable, I do not mind too much; at all events it is less costly than other inroads on my time.

Nor do I mind giving a manuscript when I am asked for one. In fact, unless somebody does ask me, the darn thing is likely to lie around the house for years. I am a bit sceptical, however, as to whether this is going to "stimulate interest in Catholic literature and so help our Catholic authors." Perhaps some of them still write their books in longhand. If so, their manuscripts might be worth possessing; but not mine. As I type every page I produce, all that my "manuscripts" reveal is that, after I have used the typewriter industriously for thirty-five years, I get

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year by year a firmer grip upon the title of the World's Worst Typist. To give one of these is a give-away. Nevertheless, anyone who wants a manuscript is welcome, so long as I am spared something worse. The only exception is my poems: these I usually destroy as soon as I have copied them out. If I have once or twice let people have the original draft—in spite of its being even more of a give-away than my typing—this is because I can be sure that nobody except myself will be able to make head or tail of my handwriting. And the poems, as often as not, are written from tail to head.

There are other ingenious ways of wasting a writer's precious time. I can't very well refuse to sign a book that is sent me, or pack it up and send it back to my unknown admirer. And if somebody writes to tell me that he has liked one of my books, politeness demands a line or two of acknowledgment. A writer must not expect to dodge all the minor penalties of authorship. I try to accept with a good grace far worse intrusions.

Thus, when I am sent a batch of poems for my "candid opinion," I read them—although I am always sure that they will prove to be bad, and still more sure that not my candid opinion but my praise is what the bard really seeks. Two or three times I have been offered a fee for this service, and have never taken it. The compensation is that the matter occasionally has its amusing side. A lady once sent me some poems for my criticism, but on getting it, she cut out of her Bible a chapter from the prophet Isaiah and mailed it to me, asking indignantly, "Perhaps you think that *that's* not good writing!" Another poet—a man, this time—sent me a long metaphysical dialogue between a husband and wife written in blank-verse. I mildly remarked that to permit the lady only three or four lines at the end was lacking in verisimilitude—especially as the subject under discussion was marriage—and he was deeply offended. Yet he was one of the people whose fee I had refused in advance.

I read the poems sent me on the off-chance that they may exhibit some talent. For a different reason I also reply to those who consult me about their master's or doctoral dissertations. When Sister Mechtilina says, "I am writing on Louise Imogen Guiney, whom I understand you knew intimately. Please answer the following questions," I answer them, if I am able to do so, though I did not know Miss Guiney intimately but met her only about three times. Now and then I can see from these letters that the budding Ph.D.'s are intelligent people who have done a good deal of honest work, and are merely calling for my assistance to fill in a few gaps. I do not pretend that I go to the pains of making special research on their behalf, but if I have any information at hand that is likely to be of assistance, I send it on. What is more of an annoyance are the S.O.S. signals from people who—so I must judge by the way they write to me—should not be working for higher degrees at all. If they do not know where to find what they want, why are they working on dissertations? All the same, I answer—as it is not their fault that they have to get teaching degrees.

It is not of this sort of thing that I complain, although it takes a lot of my time; my objection is to having my time wasted on the frivolous pretext that, by cooperating in some useless project, I can help to increase interest in Catholic literature. I hope I shall not be showing undue asperity if I point out that it is a drain on my energy and that it leaves me with all the less opportunity to do my own work. If a writer's professed admirers really want to help him, as they say they do, they can effect their object best by leaving him in peace. Also, of course, they might buy his books. But even if they do not want to do that, they might at least cease pestering him. Freed from intrusions, he might do better work. Then perhaps they would want to buy it.

Once when—in the supposition that I was airing a truism—I casually said something to another writer about how small were the sales of Catholic books, he retorted, "There I don't agree with you. I know that what you are saying is often said, but on the average, Catholic books sell better than others." After I had recovered from my gasping fit, I asked, "What do you call selling well?" His reply was, "Well, any Catholic book that is any good sells four thousand copies." I doubt whether this is the case, yet he must have meant that if a Catholic writer makes twelve hundred dollars in royalties for a year's work, he ought to be satisfied. I did not continue the discussion. As a member of a religious order, his royalties could have been of no consequence to him; and he happens to be one of the few Catholic writers who can count on a sale of twenty thousand.

Twenty thousand! I must pause to gasp again. If one of my books went as well as that, I would take a year off to answer letters, and send my life story to the guileless children who ask for it, and sign copies of my immortal (but unfortunately not particularly popular) works, and distribute autographs and photos and manuscripts right and left; in short, I would stop growling (as in this article) and be beaming and bland. The only things I would not do would be to attend literary teas and cocktail parties. After all, one must draw the line somewhere.

Editors' Choice

THIS WEEK we institute a new book review department, written entirely by the editorial staff. The reviews will not be signed. Our object is to present each week to our readers books—mostly current—which for one reason or another seem to us to deserve special notice or special comment. The fact that they are included in this column does not necessarily mean an endorsement—sometimes quite the contrary. But it does mean a desire to single out interesting and/or important volumes for their factual information, artistry and leading ideas or to serve as springboards for ideas of our own.

Not Art, Not Significant

RARELY can you pick up a novel, which has appeared as a serial in the *Saturday Evening Post* and which is frankly an escape from reality or any sort of seriousness, and end up with something worth praise. Not that the *Post* is a dull magazine or a bad thing to spend an idle hour with. But somehow what does well as a serial, to induce you to part with another dime next week, does ill between covers—unless it be a detective story. Barry

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Benefield's "Eddie and the Archangel Mike" is the first essay in this form in a good many months really to make a pretty satisfactory piece of ivory tower reading. In his blurb for war bonds, the author gives himself away. He tells us that his book was written in 1942. "It was a necessity and a relief to close the newspaper, the radio, and the mind against the peculiarly ugly images and implications of this insane war. How otherwise carry on a story having to do with a people happier than we now are and belonging to a time fairer, gentler and kinder than we shall soon see again? . . . Always the short holiday ends, always we come back to the long job that must be done."

A captious reader might wonder whether the world will ever see people like Mr. Benefield's or ever has seen them. But he would be a captious reader, a solemn one. There is nothing human or important or significant about Mr. Benefield's Eddie or Perry or Mandy. The whole story, technically well articulated as it is, has nothing to do with life or death or anything even vaguely real. It is an old trick Mr. Benefield pulls. He imagines to himself a situation where Providence (in the person of the Archangel Mike) delightfully and conveniently intervenes—and intervenes directly, which I suppose almost makes the book heretical!—in the day-to-day affairs of his pleasant puppets. Since the puppets also gain our sympathy, because they are good and have hearts of gold beneath whatever strange exteriors, we are delighted at these interventions, and we wish the whole crew well. The story is about a newspaper copy reader who picks up a young girl running away from home and hitch-hikes her to New York from the marshes of Texas. He has quite a lot of money in his pocket, and she has more than sterling honesty in her heart. Eventually she lands a job, thanks to his as well as to Providence's intervention, in a menagerie of stuffed animals, on which the patrons may take mechanical rides, in the top floor of a Brooklyn warehouse. Naturally this emporium of horizontally motionless motion turns into a howling success, and equally naturally, hero, heroine, and ex-pickpocket female Man Friday end up by starting off to found a real horse ranch in the land of milk and honey which is West Texas. There is plenty of opportunity for gentle kidding of Brooklyn, cops, pet shop proprietors, retired sea captains, odd rich characters who live on in the old family mansion surrounded by slums, and a whole gallery of other stock types. Since none of them represents anything ever seen on land or sea, the kidding is thoroughly innocent and unmalicious, and everybody has a good time.

If you want to take your mind off things, if you have a few hours to steal from contemplation of social problems and perils, if you are not so sleepy or tired that the very thought of printed matter revolts you, if you are not made ill by occasional corn, occasional clichés, more than occasional whimsy, "Eddie and the Archangel Mike" will probably do for you what it almost certainly did for its author. It will be "a short holiday." Such things are not utterly to be despised in our world.

Etruscans and Correspondents

THE ITALIANS have known so much for so long. They have had a long history. There were the Egyptians and the Chinese, the cro-Magnons, and man in general, but the Italians are a modern people and, from the point of view of our narrow civilization, they are a people like us. We proceed from all the mysterious past, of course, but immediately we proceed from people like the Italians and they, for modern peoples, for a people like ours, have had a long history. They have had a very complicated history with one result that there is not an Italian city that is like another, and not one region in which the language is like the language in another region, and the oppression peculiar to one region is not like the oppression suffered in another. The only unification that Italy has known is a common familiarity with poverty. There are gardens in Italy but they are either close to mountains and the snow, or they are close to malaria and deserts, or the water that keeps them green has been diverted from a thirsting village. The paintings in Italy are different when they were painted in Venice or Siena, or Florence, or Genoa, or Pisa or when they are the frescoes of the orantes in the catacombs, or the Byzantine frescoes in Ravenna or in Capua, or when they are Signorelli's in Orvieto, or when they are the swirling giants in the Sistine. The sculptures in Italy are different when they are the reclining figures on Etruscan tombs, or when they belong to the endless series of Roman portraits, or when they are Cellini's—smooth and long limbed—or when they are Michelangelo's, or Donatello's. There is no such thing as Italy. Italy is a name on the map. Italy is the name, the sign post, which points to a narrow peninsula—with a few rich valleys and many barren mountains and unproductive plains—on which men have made greater efforts toward all sorts of things which we revere as ideals than have done most men in most other parts of the world. The peoples who inhabit this peninsula have marched out of a complicated and differentiated past, and as a river carrying silt from the hills, carrying with them all the things they have made throughout the centuries—piling them up in museums, in poems, in music, in sanctity for us to look at them and hold through them to our past, to the past from which we draw our civilization.

Well, you put American reporters in the UP and the AP offices in Rome and no one would expect them to report the Etruscans, and no one would expect them to cable back that they are unable to report anything about the Italians because the Italians are all so different the ones from the others, and no one would expect them to say that it is impossible to be a reporter in Italy because what is true in Rome is not true in Naples and anyway they have no time to send dispatches because life is short and there is Calabria to be traveled through, and the villages on the hills above the malarial plains which you can only reach on foot and when you get there the children are starving but they do not beg. No one would expect the reporters to say that it is all a mistake their being there because it would take a lifetime to become a good archeologist and another lifetime to read the lives of the saints or the emperors or the Popes, and we will not talk about architecture and of course you have to go to the theater (in Genovese, in Neapolitan, in Sicilian) and to the opera, and to the concerts in the Sala Borromini at the Chiesa Nuova, and it is just as well to have read Stendhal, who was inventive and inaccurate, but whose feeling for Roman society is better than not to have any awareness that Roman society exists.

No, you would not ask that from the AP or the UP because of course the Packards (UP) and Mr. Massock (AP) were in Rome to cover the news of Italian pre-war fascism and the news that they could get out of the Ministry of Information and then what they saw of the Italian wars before we got into the war and they had to get out of Italy. That is what they were there for and that is what they did. There was the man on the balcony and if

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you looked at him and thought of the past of Italy and the past of humanity or if you only thought of the other cities and villages in Italy and of the countryside, then he would not seem worth reporting and you would make a very poor reporter for the AP or the UP.

The foreign correspondent has his job and it is an important and interesting job. It is only when the members of this corporation write a book about their job after it has been done, that they are apt to talk about themselves and about their personal troubles and of how they got from one place to another, and then their own affairs and their friends' affairs crowd out the history they are writing about. They seem to be writing home all the personal letters they found no time to write when they were abroad. So that their books go with the wind faster than most. In these two books in which AP and UP compare Italian memories, UP wins by a good long cable because in a *genre* requiring one to be personal the Packards are more engagingly personal than is Mr. Massock. Their book is agreeable to read. Both books are friendly to the Italian people, but perhaps the Packards saw more of the Italian people both in Italy and with the armies; the Packard testimony is more direct. Neither book makes any contribution to history, both books have some old, old stories about Mussolini but the Packards at least seem to have thought for themselves about history and they have written a concluding chapter about Italy's future which is sensible and generous. Perhaps it is best to forget that Mr. Massock (who speaks of Barthou's intention to form a "cordon sanitaire around France" for France's protection) has written a book at all, and to credit the Packards with a pleasant and intelligent account of their years abroad.

Better Schools Everywhere

BY DINT of repetition Americans are beginning to get used to the idea that they may have to have a hand in the re-education and well as the material relief and rehabilitation of Europe after the war. Some of the most thoughtful, though, who have heard the idea before, have their doubts. Does the social order here or the way Americans use their comparatively greater wealth and leisure time show enough promise to indicate that our schools are educating adequately for life here at home? There has been a sharp increase in the proportion of boys and girls attending both secondary schools and colleges during the past twenty years, but it cannot be said in honesty that the country's cultural level has risen anything like what might be expected after seeing school statistics. Nor can much be said for the political or community leadership which has been developed as a result. How then are American educators equal to the task of pointing the way to others?

Among observers familiar with our present schools themselves the outlook is even more pessimistic. Without going into the influence of Teachers College, Columbia, and other disciples of John Dewey, it may safely be said that a great proportion of our public schools present the unedifying and tragic spectacle of the blind leading the blind. The grasshoppery character of the themes of annual National Educational Association meetings year after year gives a clue. Or as Professor Kotschnig puts it in his current book, "In the absence of any clear image of the ends of human existence—apart from immediate utility, which easily confuses cash with value—all the emphasis has been put on means rather than ends."

Yet for all this the challenge of Fascist education must be met, however inadequate our present tools. It would seem, then, that the first step is domestic educational reform. And Professor Kotschnig suggests philosophy, our Jewish and Christian religious traditions and—as a last resort—the lessons of history as the means of restoring a sense of abiding values and a knowledge of valid principles on the American educational scene.

Moreover, he wants to utilize for the actual teaching as many Europeans as possible who have had the courage and stamina to uphold these values during these terrible years of oppression and war without escaping to other lands. He suggests that certain Germans in Allied prison camps may in time be prepared to be the vehicles for transplanting a humanized form of education into their native land. The author also has the sense to point out that a stable and promising national economy, in which matriculating students will find a productive place, is a prerequisite for any successful education program. These are but a few of the difficulties, but he makes a convincing case that it must be done. On this point he concludes: "The re-education of the German people will demand of us a degree of comprehension, yes, and of compassion, for which there is no precedent in history. And yet it is the only alternative to the permanent enslavement of all of mankind by war."

Professor Kotschnig seems over-optimistic about the limits of Russia's European ambitions, while his unexplained opposition to Belgian feeding is rather startling for a man of such marked intelligence and good will. But his observations on a wide range of educational problems are most able.

EDDIE AND THE ARCHANGEL MIKE. *Barry Benefield. Reynal & Hitchcock.* $2.50.

BALCONY EMPIRE. *Reynolds and Eleanor Packard. Oxford.* $3.00.

ITALY FROM WITHIN. *Richard G. Massock. Macmillan.* $3.00.

SLAVES NEED NO LEADERS. *Walter M. Kotschnig. Oxford.* $2.75.

More Books of the Week

Angel Mo' and Her Son Roland Hayes. MacKinley Helm. Little. $2.75.

ROLAND HAYES, the distinguished tenor, is a Negro, of slave ancestry, and one of his greatest spiritual contributions to America has been his frank admission of the same. As a young man, in reality a boy, as much a country boy as any that ever sought to shake the cockleburrs out of his hair and seek university education, Hayes found his way to Nashville, Tennessee, at that time the Mecca of Negro musical education. And like all other students of that period, he wanted to go forward into Ohio, and sit with the masters at Oberlin College, for Oberlin was the first college, in the West anyway, to admit women and Negroes.

But the Oberlin spirit, as Raymond Gram Swing well knows, did not countenance rebellious youth, nor undisciplined Negro youth in the arts. Roland Hayes was not a political rebel at Fisk, for this rôle was reserved for the post-World-War-I period of the late 1920's; but he was a rebel in spirit nevertheless. He was a rebel in spirit at Fisk in the matter of the kind of musical training he

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wanted, just as Swing was a rebel in the kind of political freedom he wanted at Oberlin; and all this is connected inasmuch as Fisk teachers were in the main products of Oberlin and the Oberlin spirit.

The Oberlin spirit for America and the Fisk spirit for the freedmen were the same, with some, but not many vital differences: New England at its period of greatest cultural achievement.

All this is to say that Hayes was stimulated by the Oberlin and Fisk spirit, even though he never attended Oberlin, and hardly reached the tenth grade in the high school at Fisk. But he was a strong "Fiskite," not of the social-worker, mass-production, present-day student, but of the John-Work, W.-E.-B.-DuBois, Thomas-Talley past. Hayes was a rebel along cultural lines, and frankly, in the eyes of his instructors, "he did not fit."

It is unfortunate that Mr. Hayes's story was told to one who does not understand, and who borrows too much from other Fisk lines to picture Mr. Hayes's not too romantic Fisk training and experience. Furthermore, there is too little of the young men and old who struggled to train Hayes long before he became worthy of the concert stage. We might dismiss much of this as human frailty, but still there is too little of his accompanists, William Lawrence and Lawrence Brown; but one must be pretty close to the story to appreciate these nuances.

And finally, white folk who essay to bring the full life of a Negro artist to the public must not strive to make a Booker T. Washington out of him. Mr. Hayes's experiences at the hands of some Georgia whites of limited social spirit, to put it mildly, belong in this book, but his love of the soil and lately assumed social and economic wisdom might profitably be left out. For no man is that complete, no matter how many people are staggered by his fine, human qualities. GEORGE STREATOR.

Sergeant Nikola. Istvan Tamas. Fischer. $2.50.

AMONG our other troubles of the moment we now hear that the gallant guerrillas of Yugoslavia, the Chetniks and Partisans, are fighting against each other. That in itself might not be surprising for Yugoslavia, where guerrilla warfare is undertaken with zest, romance, dash and song, but the disturbing and confusing report by the Partisans, who are communist and supported by Russia, is that the Chetniks are pro-Axis.

Put this particular bit of information into the mental compartment reserved for Yugoslavian affairs and then read "Sergeant Nikola" by Istvan Tamas. There is nothing pro-Axis about Mr. Tamas's Chetniks. Nazi blood pours forth—nazis are killed singly on one page, by the hundreds on another. Chetniks go down by the hundreds too, but not without chalking up an even score for the enemy. And that is that.

But one goes from this to the question of the war novel—can a good war novel be written right on the scene or can it not? Can a good novel spring up fully armed? Written throughout 1941, "Sergeant Nikola" is a picaresque diary rather than a novel. It is an account of the fabulous doings of a Chetnik written by himself in letters to his mother. He is a Parson Weems of a man, or a Baron Munchausen, and sometimes he brings it off successfully. There is an episode in high picaresque style when a Chetnik plane is attacked by a fierce Albanian eagle who is almost victorious in a dog fight with the plane by virtue of beak against bullet. A nazi Messerschmitt arrives on the scene. The nationalism of the Albanian

"Like a cool spring out of the good earth—"

The following quotations are taken from the first review of OLD PRINCIPLES AND THE NEW ORDER, which appeared in last week's CATHOLIC TRANSCRIPT.

"In any catalogue of the great men of our time, the name of Father Vincent McNabb must have a prominent place. This Irish-born Dominican has spent many years in one of the poorest and meanest slum areas in the world, the St. Pancras district of London. He is one of the few genuine radicals in the whole world. He goes straight to the root of the disorder that is racking and rending the social fabric. With all the sharp simplicity of a sword he cuts right to the heart of a question. With all the bluntness of a mallet he comes down hard on errors and abuses.

"Like the Pope in his Christmas message, Father McNabb begins with God and with man. Man cannot be understood except in relationship to the source and the end of his being. Man, his nature and his destiny are the measure and test of social systems, of economic orders and of political schemes. Man is not to be fitted to them; rather, they are to be fitted to man.

"The observant reader is impressed with the identity even to details, of the views of the author and those of the Holy Father in the social encyclicals. This is not simply the result of Father McNabb's close reading of those documents; rather it is the result of his thinking *with* Christ's vicar.

"Father McNabb comes back again and again to two subjects: the Family and the Land, and his pithy way of putting things is frequently in evidence. Here are some examples. He says, 'I see only in the Family—even in the shattered families of England—a ground of hope. So native to the heart of man and woman is it to have a home, and therefore a quiver-full of children, that much money and all kinds of literary best-sellers have been but moderately successful against it.' 'When the Home and Homestead have been re-established the people have re-built the best school for teaching the best lesson, of self-sacrificing love.'

"A society in which the family's central importance is recognized will inevitably be a society in which property is well distributed. 'We must not forget that the average man, of whom we are speaking, is the husband and father. His instinct for ownership is not just animal push for elbow-room, but a fine gesture of love for the wife and children of his love.' The family and productive private property, which is another way of saying the land, are bound up with each other. 'As man must eat and therefore work to eat, God made the farm, like the family, a divine institution. Home and homestead being God's foundation for mankind, flight from the land into the town, and especially into the big town, will mean flight from undertaking marriage as God wished it to be undertaken.' 'In these days it is not the internal inclination to marriage that is failing, it is the possession of the external circumstances necessary for married life.'

"OLD PRINCIPLES AND THE NEW ORDER is a disturbing book. It slices errors, fat and pink with respectability, right down to their crooked, tubercular bones. Yet it is not futilely bitter or despondent. On the contrary, it actually leaps with substantial hope, like a cool spring out of the good earth." JOHN S. KENNEDY

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eagles wins out (there are 17 of them by this time) and they leave their Chetnik compatriots and finish off the nazi instead. This is told as a tall tale and has its artistic merit, but the serious recounting of the hero's daily exploits make one doubtful, then mildly stirred and finally numb. He blows up a gasoline train single handed; he substitutes in the noose a nazi hangman for a Chetnik at the moment of execution; he blows up a ballroom-ful of nazis, and to cap it all, as far as we know, he is living right now. When Sergeant Nikola's exploits get mixed up with Yugoslav current events (as they used to be called) and you are required to switch from the fanciful to the present war, from tanks to cromornes, to hold your place, to hold on to your sympathies (and in such a welter of blood) and your hat . . . you feel that the whole brew should have brewed a bit longer to come out as a novel.

There are other moments—other tall tales, sketches of Chetnik camp life and Chetnik character—when, as a novel, "Sergeant Nikola" comes nearer to being an achievement. Mr. Tamas may even do his job too well for the good of the Chetniks. When he says that he hopes he will meet Sergeant Nikola in a "peaceful, happy Yugoslavia," one wonders what the Sergeant would do with himself under such circumstances. It just doesn't look as if peace and happiness were the right synonyms for Sergeant Nikola and Yugoslavia. MARGARET BYARD.

The Inner Forum

On Priestly Vocations

UNDOUBTEDLY a bishop's first task in his diocese is to find laborers for the harvest of souls. He who can make a man a priest has the duty to strain every effort to detect, to discover, those of his subjects whom God calls to the Altar. But let us add immediately that in such undertaking bishops need to be helped not only by the clergy but by the laity. We all need priests; we all must cooperate in the making of priests. Justice demands that all have a share in a work so conducive to God's glory and to our own salvation.

Sometimes fathers and mothers, timid rather than tepid, claim that priestly vocations are the concern of bishops and pastors: it is too sacred for them to venture into such a field. But the Church, in her official "Pontificale," at the moment when deacons and priests are to be ordained, thus warns us all: "Brethren most beloved, aboard a ship on the sea, pilots and passengers have the selfsame cause either of fear or of reassurance; there must be mutual community of interests. And so is built on reasonable ground the tradition which comes from our fathers, by virtue of which the laity must be consulted concerning the choosing of those who are preparing for the service of the sanctuary . . ."

From this we see that the Church permits, the Church requires, that the laity have a share with bishops and pastors in one of the gravest and most delicate tasks, the recruiting of soldiers for God's Army. Far from forbidding them to participate in such a decision, the Church solicits their cooperation.

The words of Christ ring and always will ring down the ages: "The harvest indeed is abundant, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send

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forth laborers into his harvest." Timely and timeless are such words, but if we consider how sinister and full of anxiety is the present hour, the more clearly we see how more than ever we all, priests and people, no exception, must unite their prayers that God may not fail to send laborers into His field which is also our field. For the time is coming when the veterans of the sanctuary passing from death unto life will have to be replaced; the time is coming when those military chaplains of ours who go to the battlefield and do not return will need successors; the time is coming when we shall have to send missionaries not to "foreign" lands, but also to Europe, thereby paying our debt, "the ten decades of alms," we received from France, Austria and Bavaria.

And now a special word for mothers. At times there are mothers who cleverly, cruelly, try to crush the priestly vocation of their sons, because they fear to see them away from home, lost to their homes. Quite groundless is such a dread, O mothers. Married, your children will give to someone else than you the better part of their hearts; priests, they will keep till their last hour, in all its exquisiteness and strength, the only affection allowed to them.

Well aware that such an attachment in no circumstances sets him asunder from God, a priest keeps his whole heart, the heart of his heart, for his mother. He loves her with that love which has not a scintilla of egoism; that love which on the shores of Ostia perfumed with its heavenly fragrance the colloquies of Monica with Augustine. His tenderness for his mother, more mellow with the years that pass, sustains the feebleness of her old age. He comforts her agony; he is her guide and her light amidst the shadows of the last torturing road; and when, speaking after the manner of men, all is finished, he carries her remembrance every morning to the Lord's Altar; he purifies her soul in the blood of Golgotha; and at last by the virtue of his intercession—granted through the infinite merit of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—he opens to her the gates of Paradise. Such is for a mother the sacred joy of having given a priest to God.

Mothers, in a letter written well nigh fifty years ago, on the day after this poor old scribe's ordination, a mother wrote this to her sister: "If it be asked what is the acme of maternal happiness, the reply must be, it is the bliss of a mother who beholds God resting upon the Altar at the word of her own son." Mothers, remember it. And to you, dear Catholic readers, let me say this: it is a great thing to give a priest to the Church of God; nothing in the universe is superior to it, is equal to it.

REV. J. M. LELEN.

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Rev. J. M. LELEN has written extensively in the Catholic press and lives in Falmouth, Ky.

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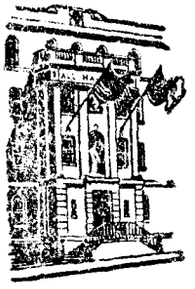

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